

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

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FM AMCONSUL SYDNEY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6050
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AS, PFOR
SUBJ: NSW REPLACEMENT OF FORMER SENATOR MURPHY

REF: SYDNEY 0299

1. PREMIER LEWIS REITERATED TODAY HIS INTENTION TO APPOINT A NON-LABOR REPLACEMENT TO MURPHY'S SEAT AND DENIED ANY REPORTED COMPROMISE. LEWIS DISPUTES LABOR'S RIGHT TO INSIST ON OBSERVANCE OF A "CONVENTION" BECAUSE OF LABOR'S VIOLATION OF CONVENTION IN THE CREATION OF THE GAIR SENATE SEAT VACANCY LAST YEAR AND ON WHITLAM'S ALLEGED "BOYCOTT" OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION WITH THE STATES IN 1973. WITH SUPPORT FROM HIS CABINET AND THE LIB/CP CONTINGENT IN NSW PARLIAMENT, LEWIS SEEMS TO BE IN STRONG POSITION AND MAY CARRY OUT HIS THREAT - ALTHOUGH HE STILL HAS A LOOPHOLE.

2. THE STAFF HEADQUARTERS OF NSW BRANCH LIB PARTY IS CHAGRINED BY COURSE OF EVENTS WHICH PUTS THE LIBS IN A DIVISIVE POSITION AND TAKES HEAT OFF MURPHY. NSW PRES. OF PARTY SAYS HE BELIEVES LEWIS MAY BE TOO FAR COMMITTED TO BACK DOWN. "BUT EITHER WAY HE IS A LOSER NOW".

3. GEN. SECY NSW BRANCH LABOR PARTY CAHILL AGREES SAYING THAT BUT FOR LEWIS' THREAT, THE LIBS "COULD HAVE HAD A WEEK FOR

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GETTING INTO MURPHY". ALP IN SYDNEY WILL GO AHEAD TOMORROW

TO NOMINATE WESTERWAY TO REPLACE MURPHY. CAHILL SAYS STATE
PARLIAMENT MIGHT DECIDE ISSUE ANY TIME AFTER WEDNESDAY FEB 19
WHEN IT RECONVENES, BUT LEWIS MIGHT STALL FOR AS MUCH AS
A MONTH.
HANNAH

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